

ARTICLE APPEARED
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31 May 1984**JACK ANDERSON****Soviets Getting
Heavy Doses
Of Radiation**

Aside from the residents of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the Soviets have been subjected to more nuclear radiation than any people on earth, because of their government's callous disregard of safety procedures.

Intelligence sources say that thousands of Soviet citizens have died as the result of accidents on nuclear submarines and at Soviet nuclear power plants and weapons complexes. Many more have been exposed to heavy doses of radiation because of irresponsible nuclear waste-disposal methods.

The appalling story of the irradiated Soviets has leaked out only in bits and pieces. But much of it is contained in secret and top-secret CIA and Pentagon documents seen by my associate Dale Van Atta.

For instance, one report mentions many "hairless" sailors in Soviet veterans' homes, suggesting that they had been overexposed to radiation from faulty nuclear reactors on submarines. Another report cites a group of 200 political prisoners suffering from radiation sickness after cleaning nuclear subs at a base near Paldiski, Estonia.

There have been at least three major accidents involving Soviet nuclear subs. The latest occurred when one sank in the northern Pacific with most of its 90-man crew aboard. In 1980, a Soviet sub caught fire about 60 miles off Okinawa and at least nine crewmen died. The bodies were laid out on the deck by men wearing strange, ankle-length white cloaks. Another Soviet sub sank off Britain in 1970.

On land, the Soviet nuclear power industry is "plagued with manufacturing deficiencies and poor workmanship," a CIA report said. It said the Soviets often cut corners on safety "to eliminate delays in their trouble-plagued nuclear program."

Intelligence reports suggest that there may have been nearly a dozen plant shutdowns. A reactor at Rovno in the Ukraine is known to have gone "critical" in December, 1981, while one at Shevchenko was shut down after faults developed in pipes and turbines.

A Soviet official confided to a visiting congressman that at least two other incidents had occurred. One was the rupture of a coolant line and the other an explosion that spread radioactive steam outside the power plant.

The CIA has catalogued at least three major nuclear accidents in the Soviet Union since the 1950s. One happened in 1960 or 1961, another in the early 1970s.

But the worst occurred in the winter of 1957-58 near Kasli, Chelyabinsk Province, in the Urals. A chemical explosion in tanks of radioactive wastes released Strontium 90 and other dangerous elements. The resulting radioactivity was about 1,000 times higher than bomb fallout.

The accident contaminated several hundred square miles, forcing the evacuation of 30 villages.

Hundreds of Soviets are believed to have perished in the explosion; many others died from long-term effects. The victims included "death squads" of prisoners sent into the area on futile cleanup missions in the early 1960s. The Soviets finally gave up, razed the villages and now use the area to train soldiers for nuclear war.

Soviet disposal methods for nuclear wastes often look good on paper, but apparently are carelessly followed. And some of their methods, injecting waste into water-bearing geologic strata deep underground and solidifying it into blocks stored in bunkers, are frowned on by U.S. safety experts.

Even more alarming is the Soviet propensity simply to classify inadequately treated low-level nuclear waste as "non-radioactive" and dump it into the nearest river. This is what's done with waste from the Moscow nuclear power plant on the Moscow River.